



F O C U S

Newsletter for the Office for Prevention of Family Violence

Order in the Court!

*A new project brings justice
to domestic violence in Calgary*

In Calgary's courtroom # 412, Barb (not real name) sits nervously as her live-in partner pleads guilty to domestic violence charges. Two days earlier, Barb was paralyzed with fear as Max (not real name) tried to break down the bedroom door. "Surely he will kill me. This is how I'll die," she thought. Filled with terror, she called 911. Screeching police cruisers arrived and took away Max.

Although Barb fears for her life, she has confidence in a new court room system dedicated solely to domestic violence. The court—the only one of its kind in Canada—is for first appearances, accepting guilty pleas and handing down sentences when a guilty plea has been entered.

Speeding up the court process

In the past, Barb may have waited months for Max's case to be heard in court. But now, "The offender appears in court within four days from being charged," says Karen Walroth, Coordinator of the Action Committee Against Violence (ACAV).

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FOCUS NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2001



Be a special person
in a child's life.



You'll Never Know
the Difference
You Make

AADAC Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
An Agency of the Government of Alberta

www.aadac.com

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resilient nature? Can you create environ-
ments to foster resiliency in others?
Find out on Page 5.*

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Order in the Court!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

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The court can hear cases quickly because of a unique pre-court conference that brings together many justice experts. Each morning, the probation officers, victim advocates, crown prosecutors, police and lawyers meet to find an effective plan to address the offense.

Since it began last May, the court has heard about 3,000 cases—five times more than originally anticipated. "The process is more efficient and cases are getting to the courts faster," explains Karen.

By speeding up the court process, there's less danger to victims like Barb. The offender is off the streets sooner. He or she starts treatment within 48 hours of pleading guilty. "This gives offenders more opportunities to change their ways," says Karen.

"The quicker you get an offender to court, the more likely they'll feel remorse. If there's a long waiting period, the offender may rationalize their behavior," says Wayne Stewart, Project Director of the Calgary Justice Working Project.

\$6 million dollar funding

The new court system is central to a four-year, \$6 million dollar pilot project to address abuse in the Calgary area. The Calgary Justice Working Project is funded by three levels of government and is the culmination of 10 years of work.

"We looked at intervention programs from across North America. Then we had representatives come from Winnipeg, Toronto and San Diego. We picked the best from each and came up with our own version," says Karen.

When the project is completed, there will be extensive evaluations. "We're setting up this project to become a model for other cities," Karen explains.



Linking victims and offenders

Everyone trained in domestic violence

A big plus for the new court is that all personnel are trained in domestic violence. "Everyone from the judge, police to crown prosecutors understands the cycle of violence and the seriousness of the crime," says Wayne. Working together fosters faster and fairer sentencing and increased treatment for offenders.

"Crown prosecutors are well-prepared because of the new system. Judges make better decisions about sentencing and releases because they have all the facts," says Karen.

All the information comes to the table at the pre-court conference. Has the offender been



to community agencies

convicted previously? Has he/she been on probation? Was there a 911 tape? What is the risk to family and community?

The victim also benefits from the trained court room staff. "An advocate works with the victim from the moment the partner is arrested to the time probation is over," Karen explains.

Linking victims and offenders to community agencies

The new court breaks the cycle of domestic violence by providing services to victims and their children and treatment programs to offenders. More than 60 community agencies are involved in the project.

"This is community work at its best. A wide range of stakeholders have dedicated many hours to this project," says Karen. The Calgary Justice Working Project acts as a forum to link all the community groups—such as treatment agencies, shelters, outreach programs and legal services.

The network of services means offenders can be ordered by the court to start treatment within 48 hours after pleading guilty. "For the first sentence, the offender may get treatment as part of their sentence. But if he does not show up for treatment, then he's back in court and the deal is off," says Wayne.

Any court violations, such as breaches of orders, are fast-tracked back into the court. "In the past, the offender would receive a summons and the process was more lengthy. Now they go back into court very quickly," explains Karen.

Working with so many community agencies is not always easy. "Justice and the community don't always speak the same language. At the beginning, we spent a lot of time trying to decipher what the other was saying," laughs Karen.

But the national demonstration project has come a long way. "People are looking at us really carefully. Our evaluations will be very thorough," says Karen.

The project will not only change the way the court system works, but will put domestic violence in the spotlight as a very serious crime.

"Domestic violence is a killer. It is not just something that happens behind closed doors," says Wayne.

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**KAREN WALROTH,
COORDINATOR OF THE
ACTION COMMITTEE
AGAINST VIOLENCE
(ACAV)**



How to improve your resiliency IQ

Do you have the capacity to tap your own resilient nature? Can you create environments to foster resiliency in others?

Making the concept of resiliency practical and easily understood can be a challenge. But resiliency is not some mystical thing that you find somewhere else, or ask someone to give you.

Resiliency is in the little things. It means taking small moments to build relationships with those you are trying to influence; helping them achieve insight; supporting them in taking a risk; and encouraging them to think more broadly, hopefully, optimistically and practically.

There are many ways to create environments that foster resilience in others, especially in youth:

- **Encourage young people to set rules and consequences, plan and prepare snacks, and take action in their community.**
- **Share their hopes.**
- **Give them freedom to make decisions.**
- **Teach them to approach adults with their concerns.**
- **Show them that you believe they are competent.**
- **Stand back and let young people take charge. Kids perform better if you let go of the need to provide all the answers.**

Building healthy communities and encouraging healthy development in youth is more about process than programs. Those working in the field of resiliency need to adopt an asset-based approach—focusing on what is present, not what is absent. This approach requires that practitioners make a personal investment, manifesting an attitude of creativity and hope. It requires daily acts of caring and building supportive relationships between adults and youth, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children.

Resiliency gives meaning to what Abraham Maslow called “the great lesson from the true mystics”—“that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is found in one’s daily life, in one’s neighbours, friends and family, and in one’s back yard”.

Adapted with permission from AADAC, “Developments Newsletter”, February/March 1999 edition.

Calendar of Events:



A Holistic Approach to Working
with Women Who Experience Violence:
A Series of Forums
New Westminster, B.C.
Offered by the Justice Institute

**March 27, 2001 Sex, Violence and
Substance Use (\$15)**

**April 10, 2001 Violence, Substance
Use and Health Issues (\$15)**

**May 1, 2001 Prison, Violence and
Substance Use (\$15)**

**June 5, 2001 Parenting, Violence and
Substance Use (\$15)**

Contact: Cheryl Bell-Gadsby
Tel: (604) 528-5626
OR Contact: Heather Olson
Tel: (604) 528-5573



April 26 to 28, 2001

Calgary, Alberta
Canadian Association for Young Children
(CAYC) National Conference
Canadian Children: Our Most Valuable
Resource

Workshops include brain research, early
intervention, diversity, guidance, early liter-
acy, curriculum and professionalism. The
keynote speakers are Ron Morrish (Secrets
of Discipline) and Mary Gordon (Roots of
Empathy).

Contact: Elizabeth Munroe
Tel: (403) 932-4124
e-mail: emunroe@rockyview.ab.ca



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HOW TO BUILD A RESILIENT CHILD

resilient child.

How to build a

Apologize when you're wrong * TEACH MANNERS

KEEP AN OPEN MIND * Ask questions, listen to the answers

R e m e m b e r t o b r e a t h e

Let a child goof up, then try again * GIVE THEM CREDIT

SEE MISTAKES AS SIGNS OF PROGRESS * Push gently

IF YOU CAN'T CHANGE IT, LET IT GO

Let the child figure it out * COOK DINNER TOGETHER

Let a child make mistake * LET THEM GO

SUPPORT A CHILD'S PASSION * Give consistent messages

LET YOUR CHILD TELL YOU A BEDTIME STORY

NURTURE A CHILD'S ABILITIES * Encourage a child to give

Do what you love * Invite grandparents to dinner

Compare a child only to themselves * ASK THEIR OPINION

EAT WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY * Make gifts together

Establish routines and traditions

LISTEN SOME MORE * Expect excellence, not perfection

ASK A CHILD FOR THE ANSWER TO A PROBLEM

Plan a holiday together * REWARD EFFORT

Teach traditions, beliefs, and values

Laugh more * Know your child's friends

Let them know your expectations before they break them

Take a young person under your wing * READ TO A CHILD

Adapted with permission from AADAC's Resiliency Campaign.

Theme: "You'll Never Know the Difference You Make...Preventing Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Problems"

REVIEWS

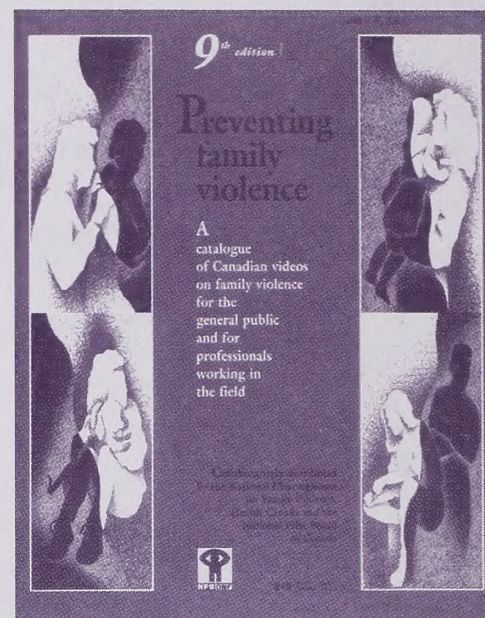
Resource Review . . .

Preventing Family Violence catalogue

The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence has recently issued its ninth edition of the Preventing Family Violence catalogue. This publication is an up-to-date guide that gives an extensive listing of Canadian videos that deal with domestic abuse.

Videos listed in the catalogue have been carefully reviewed by the staff at the National Clearinghouse to ensure materials are sensitive, useful, modern and relevant. Titles in this publication are listed alphabetically under four subject headings: child abuse, child sexual abuse, woman abuse and abuse of older adults.

The National Clearinghouse, of Health Canada, is a resource centre for all Canadians seeking information on and solutions to family violence.



Contact:

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence
Health Promotion and Programs Branch
Health Canada

Toll free: 1-800-267-1291

Toll free FaxLink: 1-888-267-1233

TTY toll free: 1-800-561-5643

Website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/nc-cn

FOCUS

FOCUS is published quarterly by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and contributions, especially news about events and activities in your community.

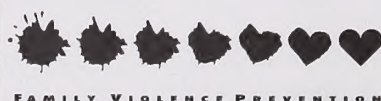
Please address correspondence to:

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Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4

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Call toll-free by dialing 310-0000 from anywhere in Alberta. Persons who are deaf or hearing impaired may call (780) 427-9999 in Edmonton, and 1-800-232-7215 outside Edmonton.



FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION



NEWS

Community . . .

RED DEER

Red Deer Neighbourhood Place

If you or your agency are concerned about issues facing children and families—bring your concerns to Neighbourhood Place. This Red Deer organization acts as a spring-board to help agencies find solutions. Neighbourhood Place also provides referrals to services and programs in the area.

Address:

Neighbourhood Place
Crimson Centre
4730 Ross Street
Red Deer AB T4N 1X2

Tel: (403) 342-1265

Fax: (403) 309-2029

e-mail: rdnp@telusplanet.net

In the next Issue:

Further information on
"Early Brain Development"



